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CENTER SCENE

The Bureau of Land Management Service Center Newsletter *June 1987*

President Designates ALMRS as a "Presidential Priority System"

President Reagan, in a report issued by his Office of Management and Budget (OMB), designated ALMRS as one of only 17 high-priority sytems in the entire Federal government.

"I have asked for $1.4 billion to bring these systems up to the level of private sector standards by 1988," said the President in Management of the United States Government - Fiscal Year 1988. Among other systems identified with ALMRS as priorities are the Internal Revenue Service Tax System redesign, modernization of the Social Security and air traffic control computer systems, and replacing the current FTS communications system.

The President began noting Presidential Priority Systems in 1985, "because of their size, complexity, sensitivity, or because they represented new precedent-setting applications of technology. The administration is committed to achieving excellence in these systems."

ALMRS is scheduled to contract software development in 1988 with nationwide implementation completed in 1993. The prestigious designation attracts attention to ALMRS and the BLM from many levels of the Administration. Early this month in Washington, top OMB officials are expected to hold a major system review of BLM's ALMRS Project.

As examples of the benefits of improved technology in BLM, the report noted that ALMRS will speed responses to inquiries by up to 70% and will provide maps of oil and gas leases in minutes as opposed to weeks (as is the case in some offices when a backlog develops).

Designation as a Presidential Priority System is considered an example of the recognition at the highest levels of the Government that the BLM is successfully planning and implementing ALMRS, and that it is well worth the investment.

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Lost any Ground Lately?

The BLM has been working with scientists from the Agricultural Research Service (ARS) to improve the applicability of the Universal Soil-Loss Equation (USLE) to rangelands. An IBM-compatible (MSDOS) version of the draft revised USLE (RVUSLE) is now available for field review.

The original Universal Soil-Loss Equation is an empirical erosion model designed to compute long-term average annual soil losses from sheet and rill erosion. The numerous physical factors affecting soil loss are described by factors representing rainfall patterns, soil type, topography, vegetation cover, and management practices. Data from over 10,000 runoff and soil-loss plots, mostly located in the eastern and midwestern United States, were used to quantify each of the variables in USLE.

The BLM-ARS RVUSLE project is intended to provide a procedure for applying USLE to arid and semiarid rangelands in the western United States. The basic concepts and framework of USLE are preserved. However, additional emphasis is placed on factors which strongly influence soil-loss on rangelands such as rock cover, depression storage, vegetation type, production, and the dominating influence of a very few, high intensity-short duration precipitation events on long-term average soil loss.

Properly applied, the revised USLE should be useful in interpreting range site, cover, and production data in terms of upland soil loss. Upon completion of the field review, ARS will publish a handbook/user-guide for the revised USLE. Additional information on the USLE can be obtained from the Division of Resources.

Adventure Down Under

Imagine your 16-year-old coming home and announcing she's going to Australia? For Dave Lyons, a Contract Specialist in the Branch of Procurement, this scenario happened this past year. Dave was delighted to hear of Karrie's interest in the world "Down Under".

Dave and Karrie are both active in the Lakewood Sister City Program. Lakewood's Sister City in Australia is Southerlandshire, a suburb south of Sidney. Each year, ten Jefferson County High School students and their families participate with Australian families. The program involves 6 month exchange visits, letters and phone conversations.

Karrie, an Evergreen high school student, attended several meetings and had two interviews before she was accepted into the program. In August 1986, an Aussie exchange student named Kelly Spence arrived to spend 6 months with the Lyons. Kelly quickly became a member of the family, attending Evergreen High for the first semester. The two girls went skiing 15 days, traveled to Taos and the Grand Canyon, and went on many excursions around Colorado.

Now Karrie and Kelly are Down Under, with Kelly's family acting as hosts. Both attend Carrinbah High School. The two girls have visited Canberra, camped out along the southern coast in the midst of hopping kangaroos, and spent Easter vacation on a small yacht crusing Botamy Bay. Needless to say, Karrie is having the time of her life.

There are many benefits to the Sister City Program. It's a tremendous learning experience for both students and their families. It also gives teens a chance to get out in the real world for the first time. Improvement in international relations is an important factor.

(by Dave Lyons and Bob Woerner)

Gordon (OD) Jennings

Gordon Jennings, a member of the SCD/ASCD's Staff, works on a wide variety of assignments for the SC and the Bureau in the field of Organization Development (OD).

Since moving into the OD field from his previous assignment in Personnel, Gordon has worked with State Offices in New Mexico, Wyoming and Colorado, the Service Center Management Team, and the ALMRS Project Staff on specific OD applications. These OD interventions have all been highly rewarding, but Gordon says that his greatest satisfaction to date has been the Bureauwide Careers Program.

The Careers Program was developed initially by Gordon and Clair Whitlock, then Idaho State Director, to address problems the Bureau was having with managerial readiness. In consultation with other State Directors and advisors throughout BLM, Gordon and Clair broadened the original concept to include the career development of all employees. When the new concept was approved, Gordon was asked to work with Bob Moore, then Colorado ASD, to create and pilot a developmental workshop for aspiring managers at the GS-9/11/12 levels. The Management and Leadership (M&L) Workshop emerged and is now a regular part of the way the Bureau prepares its future managers. Following the success of the M&L Workshop, Gordon collaborated with Mike Evans, his Washington Office counterpart, to develop and test the Advanced Leadership Workshop for GM 13/14 and 15s. The first class of "Advanced Leaders" was held this past November in Estes Park.

"The goal of all OD efforts is positive change and transformation," Gordon said recently in an interview. "When you add to this the challenge of motivating and stimulating leadership you really have a chance to do something worthwhile for the organization."

Gordon's background includes 3 years at the U.S. Military Academy, a B.S. and an ROTC commission from the University of Utah, service in Vietnam, a Masters Degree from CU, and adjunct faculty positions with Regis College and the Colorado Division of the University of Phoenix. Gordon is an Area Chair in the University of Phoenix Graduate Program and teaches management, negotiation and conflict resolution, organization development, and human resources development. In 1985 he was presented with the Director's Award for outstanding faculty and he won that award again in 1986-87.

Gordon and his wife Bea, a Communications Consultant, live in Wheat Ridge. They have a grown son, one son in high school, a multi-type family dog, and Moxie the Wonder Dog, a pedigreed German Wirehaired Pointer who somtimes hunts pheasants. Gordon is also known to hunt elk without much "moxie" or luck.

Minicomputer Operations

The minicomputer section located in the Branch of Production in the Division of Computer Operations, is responsible for the operation of the Honeywell Level-6 and Recognition equipment (REI) Tartan data entry minicomputer system. Each of these computer systems is equipped with its own independent, full range of functions such as data communications, sort/merge, print and compile capabilities.

The Tartan data entry system supports 21 separate key entry workstations. Operators key in a myriad of data on these workstations including the Bureau's Time and Attendance payroll data which eventually create paychecks, travel advances and travel reimbursements.

Range, timber, oil and gas leases, personal property, cadastral and other data are also entered into automated system capabilities using the Tartan minicomputer workstations. Key entry operators reach a speed of up to 15,000 key strokes per hour.

The Honeywell Level-6 minicomputer is used for a number of functions including file-to-file transfer of data from State Office Level-6s to the mainframe computer system (Honeywell DPS 8/70), transfer of BLM payroll data to the Bureau of Reclamation CYBER computer for processing, and for testing and trouble-shooting Level-6 software packages and releases prior to distribution to all BLM Level-6 sites.

Upcoming Events

Mountain Man Nuts & Fruits
June 5 Bldg 40 - Lobby
FERS Orientation
June 15 & 19 Bldg 50 - Cent
New Employee Orientation
June 25 & 26 Bldg 50 - West/Cent
Multicultural Observance
July 15 Bldg 50 - West/Cent

Happiness is...

Ms. Bunny, aka the SC Clerical Club, took over where Santa and Mrs. Claus left off last December. Due to Ms. B's generosity two delighted girls, ages 8 and 10, were each able to get a new Spring outfit (including shoes that actually fit!) and their mother, a single parent suffering from multiple sclerosis, was able to pay the utility bill. They wish to say "thank you" to all SC employees who support the nut, candy, and flower sales of the Club.

Buying a Disk Drive

Storage and its reliability may be the single most important component of a microcomputer.

Thanks to increased storage capability, improved reliability and a reduction in cost, hard disks have largely replaced floppy disks as the primary storage device. Now most floppy disks are used to store old programs and data or as a method of backup for current programs and data.

Hard disk storage ranges from 10 mb (10 million characters) to over 100 mb. Generally speaking, an IBM-XT, or compatible, comes with 20 mb hard disks while an IBM-AT, or capatible, will have a 40 mb hard disk. In comparison, a 5 1/4 inch floppy disk is capable of storing 360 kb (360,000 characters).

In order to know which size hard disk to buy, estimate your data and software requirements, double or triple this estimate and round up to the nearest drive storage capacity available. Keep in mind that micros are not meant for voluminous size (10 mb +) databases. They may hold the data but will run slowly.

If possible, buy a name brand disk drive. Response times vary significantly between manufacturers and the speed of the drive affects how fast your system runs, although it is not the only factor. Seagage, MiniScribe and Rodine are some of the quality disk drives available.

Buying other components will be discussed in a later issue.